

MINUTES

R&R Programme Board

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| Meeting date | 25 February 2025 |
| Meeting location | Ministerial Conference Room, Palace of Westminster |
| Meeting time | 13:00–16:00 |

Attendees

| Programme Board | Officials |
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| Judith Cummins MP | Katya Cassidy (Client Team) |
| Lord Vaux of Harrowden | Chris Elliott (Commons) |
| Marie Goldman MP | Andy Helliwell (Lords) |
| Mark Tami MP | Russ MacMillan (Delivery Authority) |
| Lord Mackinlay of Richborough | Danielle Nash (Client Team) |
| Dr Michele Dix | Charlotte Simmonds (Client Team) |
| Paul Duffree | Jenni Singleton (Client Team) |
| Steve Hails | Michael Torrance (Lords) |
| Sir Jonathan Stephens | Bev Weston (Commons) |
| Simon Burton | Matt White (Delivery Authority) |
| Tom Goldsmith | James Young (Client Team) |
| | John Sharp (Pick Everard, Commons contractor) (for item 3) |
| | Emma Downing (Commons) (for Item 6 and 7) |

1. Welcome and standing items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the February meeting of the R&R Programme Board, and welcomed Russ MacMillan, Chief Executive of the Delivery Authority, to his first meeting.

Apologies were received from Lord Collins.

The Programme Board agreed to the publication of the minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2025.

The Board discussed the forward programme for the Sub Board.

2. Update from Managing Director of the Client Team and monthly highlight report

The Managing Director of the Client Team updated the Board, including:

- the Programme Highlight Report for December—changes requested to the report that had been implemented and the Client Team was aiming to for Board members to see future reports with a reduced time lag;
- the Sub Board had considered initial findings from the Grant Thornton independent assurance and had requested further information ahead of Programme Board considering it in March;
- the final report from Grant Thornton on EMI assurance would be completed in early March and then presented to the Sub Board;
- the independent panel had concluded the health, safety and fire review fieldwork and the report was being drafted;
- the information requested by the Programme Board about temporary accommodation options which had been previously considered but not progressed would come in a paper in March but an oral update was provided on some of the key recurring alternative proposals to the agreed preferred locations which had been discounted;
- information about the differences in tunnelling approaches between the options would be brought to the Board in April;
- engagement with parliamentary committees across both Houses and feedback received would be provided in an April paper on parliamentary engagement; and
- the political meeting on QEII had been slightly delayed but all political stakeholders were positively engaged.

The Board discussed some previously considered temporary accommodation options. The Board agreed to consider the upcoming paper on previous temporary accommodation options at the meeting in March before any further re-consideration of alternative options.

The R&R Programme Board noted the update from the Managing Director of the Client Team and the December Programme highlight report.

3. Consideration of costed proposal options: delivery approaches

The Board noted that none of the options could start immediately following a decision and that the levels of occupancy determined how temporary services were provided.

Board members advocated for EMI to be subject to the same rigorous challenge as the full decant and continued presence options. Board members queried the duration of enabling works being shorter under EMI and requested that the differences between the schedule of enabling works for the different options be set out clearly in the paper on schedule.

The Board discussed disruption and noted that EMI would still feel like a construction site as well as the increased levels of disruption caused by regular ongoing change and continuous flux rather than one big change. Mitigations, such as hoarding, would be put in place to minimise these risks and would follow procedures currently followed. The Board noted that there may be a difference

between a decision on what stakeholders are willing to tolerate and the reality during construction. The Board discussed the importance of properly understanding disruption.

The Board discussed the need for clear information on the timeline for benefits realisation and risk for both the building and building users.

The Board pressed for an increased level of exchange of information and constructive challenge between the Strategic Estates and Delivery Authority teams, and noted that there was more that could be done to maximise the expertise in the two teams to develop work on the options.

The Board noted that there were issues relating to sharing information between the two teams and that there was an upcoming meeting between officials to discuss parliamentary controls on information.

The R&R Programme Board:

a) noted the key features of the different delivery approaches and considered whether the variances in the delivery approaches require further discussion and engagement;
b) noted that potential changes to temporary accommodation could affect cost and schedule information used in the delivery options assessment process; and
c) noted that the different delivery approaches drive the performance against the key evaluation criteria, which the Board will be invited to assess further in the April Board meeting.

4. Consideration of costed proposal options: temporary accommodation

The Board noted that trade-offs would be required in temporary accommodation.

The Board noted the information shown about services provided under EMI and noted that further maturity of EMI might tease out some further detail and potentially change the level and adequacy of provision.

The Board discussed the lack of provision, under current plans, for an Education Centre on the Northern Estate.

The Board requested clarification and consistency on dates related to the schedule.

Board members noted that the user experience on the northern estate needed to be spelled out more clearly, including specific information about what was meant by the different building standards, as well a need to understand the standard of the Palace. Board members requested information about the definition of parliamentary standards.

The Board discussed the need to engage key stakeholders about the proposals which impacted them directly.

Board members discussed the requirements for a resilience chamber and considered it was required under all options to ensure the continued business of Parliament. Board members noted that a resilience chamber could have other purposes when not being used for resilience.

Board members requested a briefing on the refurbishment of the Northern Estate.

5. Evaluation criteria

The Board commended the additional sub criteria included in the paper and noted that more information on health and safety criteria would come to the Board in April.

The R&R Programme Board **noted** the detailed description of the evaluation criteria being used to compare delivery options.

6. Member consultation strategy and engagement update

The Board was updated on the briefings being provided to Members and staff and the information provided (scope and timelines) and noted that the content of these would evolve as the Programme progressed.

Board members asked about tracking of progress against the engagement plan. It was noted that this would be done through the Managing Director's updates to the Board and in quarterly reports.

A Board member recommended increased use of videos for engagement. The Board noted that the Chair had featured in a video related to R&R shared on parliamentary channels.

The R&R Programme Board

- a) **approved** the Member consultation strategy for publication; and
- b) **noted** the engagement update.

7. Trade Union engagement

Trade union representatives representing the House of Commons Administration, House of Lords Administration and Members' staff spoke to the Board. They informed the Board that it was important for union representatives to feed directly into the decision-making process on behalf of staff.

Board members requested that, when the union representatives return to the Board in April, they bring real life stories from staff, including those working on the building.

Trade union representatives commended R&R engagement with staff and the focus of the request from the unions was political engagement. The Board noted that since the new mandate, 420 workshops had taken place, more 1,200 staff (Administration and Members) had attended briefings and 700 had been on a tour.

8. Interim update to the R&R Client Board

The Board agreed that as well as asking what information the Client Board wanted, the interim update should indicate the Programme Board's intent to provide clear advice and recommendations.

The Board discussed the level of information that should be provided to the Client Board. Board members noted that while Programme Board was immersed in the detail, the Client Board would need information at a higher level.

Board members fed in aspects of the discussions on delivery approaches and temporary accommodation to be included in the interim update. It was agreed that the update would be sent to Programme Board members for any comments by exception with a short deadline in order to allow for circulation to the Client Board.

The R&R Programme Board **considered** its interim update to Client Board.

9. AOB

Board members noted that the report of the walkaround with the Chairs of the PLP Disability Group was helpful, and the Board noted its support of constructive engagement with Members on disability and accessibility in relation to R&R.

The Board met in private.